

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of integrating a new source of supply into an electronic purchasing process, the method comprising:

initiating an electronic purchasing process on a purchasing computing system having an internal business partner directory of suppliers and information related to the suppliers, wherein the internal business partner directory is hosted by a service provider of the purchasing computing system;

providing, as part of the initiated electronic purchasing process, a sourcing graphical user interface on a display device of the purchasing computing system, the sourcing graphical user interface having a first user entry area to enter, as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process, a supplier included in the internal business partner directory, the sourcing graphical user interface further having a second area to initiate a search for additional suppliers not included in the internal business partner directory, the second area including a user-selectable listing of at least one external business partner directory of suppliers wherein each of the listed at least one external business partner directory is user selectable, each of the at least one external business partner directory being hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the purchasing computing system and the internal business partner directory;

receiving a user selection of one of the listed at least one external business partner directory, and upon receiving the user selection, establishing electronic communication, by the purchasing computing system, with the selected external business partner directory, and receiving information from the selected external business partner directory to provide, on the display device of the purchasing computing system, a display of a directory of the suppliers in the selected external business partner directory;

receiving, at the purchasing computing system, a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external business partner directory, sending an electronic request from the purchasing computing system and to the selected external business partner directory, the electronic request identifying the selected supplier, and in response receiving an electronic response that includes predefined required information to create in the internal business partner directory a business partner entry for the selected supplier;

creating, using the information from the electronic response, a new business partner entry in the internal business partner directory, the new business partner entry for the selected supplier;

determining whether a user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new business partner entry;

responsive to a determination that approval is not required, identifying the new business partner as authorized in the internal business partner directory, and allowing the user to continue with the electronic purchasing process with the selected supplier as a source of supply; and

responsive to a determination that the user does not have said authority, determining an authorized approver for the business partner entry, initiating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver, and putting the electronic purchasing process on hold.

~~assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process.~~

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said creating of the new business partner entry comprises mapping parsed information from the electronic response into fields according to a partner interface protocol.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information received from the selected external business partner directory comprises an HTML page.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information received from the selected external business partner directory comprises an XML page.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic purchasing process requires a supplier business partner.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
completing the electronic purchasing process with the new business partner entry.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising generating a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising:  
generating a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and  
flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

deleting the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.

15-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) A computing system comprising:  
an internal business partner directory including information relating to a plurality of suppliers;  
a network device; and  
an electronic procurement computing system hosted by a service provider that also hosts the internal business partner directory, the electronic procurement system operative to:  
initiate an electronic purchasing process on the electronic procurement system;  
provide, as part of the initiated electronic purchasing process, a sourcing graphical user interface on a display device of the electronic purchasing computing system, the sourcing graphical user interface having a first user entry area to enter, as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process, a supplier included in the internal business partner directory, the sourcing graphical user interface further having a second area to initiate a search for additional suppliers not included in the internal business partner directory, the second area including a user-selectable listing of at least one external business partner directory, wherein each of the listed at least one external business partner directory is user selectable;  
receive a user selection of one of the listed at least one external business partner directory, and upon receiving the user selection, establish electronic communication with the selected external business partner directory, and receive information from the selected external business partner directory to provide, on the display device of the purchasing computing system, a display of a directory of the suppliers in the selected external business partner directory;

upon receiving a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external business partner directory, send an electronic request to the selected external business partner directory, the electronic request identifying the selected supplier, and in response receive an electronic response that includes predefined information to create in the internal business partner directory a business partner entry for the selected supplier;

create, using the information from the electronic response, a new business partner entry in the internal business partner directory, the new business partner entry for the selected supplier; and

determine whether a user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new business partner entry;

responsive to a determination that approval is not required, identify the new business partner as authorized in the internal business partner directory, and allow the user to continue with the electronic purchasing process with the selected supplier as a source of supply; and

responsive to a determination that the user does not have said authority, determine an authorized approver for the business partner entry, initiate an approval workflow item for the authorized approver, and put the electronic purchasing process on hold.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to map parsed information from the electronic response into fields according to a partner interface protocol.

32. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the information received from the selected external business partner directory comprises an HTML page.

33. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the information received from the selected external business partner directory comprises an XML page.

34. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the electronic purchasing process requires a supplier business partner.

35. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:  
complete the electronic purchasing process with the new business partner entry.

36. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 35, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:  
generate a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:  
flag the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

39. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 38, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:  
generate a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and  
flag the purchasing document as on hold.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously Presented) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:

delete the new business partner entry from the internal business partner directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.